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Army To Delay Cuts Listed For Detrick

The Army will hold up its planned manpower cuts at Fort Detrick until the future use of the fort's biological research laboratories is determined, Sen. Charles McC. Mathias and Cong. J. Glenn Beall jointly announced Wednesday evening.

The Army's decision means that no action will be taken on a reduction in force of 295 employees announced March 6, until the Nixon administration reaches a decision on the future of the chemical-biological warfare center, Sen. Mathias said.

"The Secretary of the Army assured me today that the Army is keenly aware of the importance of keeping the research team at Fort Detrick together until a decision has been made as to its future.

"Sec. Stanley Resor told me the army recognizes that its biological laboratories at Ft. Detrick have unique facilities and an outstanding research staff."

The Maryland Republican Senator has proposed that Fort Detrick's laboratories be used to conduct research for the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health, Education and Welfare and other government agencies dealing with the environment. Sen. Mathias made the proposal last fall after President Nixon announced termination of the fort's role in chemical-biological warfare research on offensive capabilities.

The Nixon administration's science advisor, Dr. Lee DuBridge, is studying his proposal

for converting Ft. Detrick's laboratories to civilian use and continuing defensive GBW research there, Sen. Mathias said. He said he will meet with DuBridge to press for an early resolution of the question.

Sen. Mathias reported that he and Sec. Resor would meet "in the near future" to discuss further problems caused by cutbacks in personnel at Ft. Holabird and Ft. Meade.

He said meetings are also planned with the secretaries of the Navy and Air Force to discuss reductions in force planned by those services in Maryland and what steps are being taken to help find new employment for those affected.